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Rev. George Putnam
with my best regards.
Chandler Robbins.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

AFTER THE DEATH

OF

MRS. ELIZA FROTHINGHAM AND MRS. CORNELIA F. WOLCOTT,

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER;

THE LATTER OF WHOM DIED JUNE 1, AND THE FORMER JUNE 5, 1850.

BY CHANDLER ROBBINS.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON,
21, School Street.
1850.

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PREFACE.

This Sermon is printed for private circulation, at the request of the family of those of whom it is a small memorial. Had it seemed to me becoming, and could I have trusted myself, it would have been a grateful task to have depicted more distinctly and at length the exalted characters of a Mother and Sister so dear to me; for more faultless characters I have never known, — more beautiful lives never seen. The several relations of child, sister, wife, mother, and friend, — relations intrinsically great, and whose greatness *they* made apparent, — both of them filled with equal fidelity and grace, with equal strength and gentleness, with equal vivacity and steadiness, with equal sweetness and dignity, with a perfection that cannot be excelled. Both of them were truly great. We felt the force of their virtuous will, as much as the kindliness of their affections. We reverenced them no less than we loved. In seasons of most unreserved intercourse, we could not lose sight of their saintly purity:

and, in the playfulness of fireside mirth, the veil of angelic modesty was never put aside. They strengthened whilst they soothed us; and, when ministering to our delight and comfort with the endearing alacrity of woman's tenderness, corrected our weakness, controlled our tempers, and invigorated our virtue.

Closely resembling each other in moral features; kindred in spirit as in flesh; one in heart, one in faith, one in work, one in the dearest objects of love, both on earth and in heaven; "lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death they were not divided." May the same twofold cord by which they joined, on earth, to lead us upward, henceforth, reaching down from heaven, with a still sweeter and more powerful constraint draw our hearts to God!

SERMON.

PSALM XXXIX. 4:

LORD, MAKE ME TO KNOW MINE END, AND THE MEASURE OF MY DAYS, WHAT IT IS, THAT I MAY KNOW HOW FRAIL I AM.

EVENTS are God's most eloquent preachers, and often, when the heart is closed against the most earnest appeals of human instructors, speak to it, under his direction, with a commanding authority, with subduing, melting power; impressing down to its depths, in a single day, lessons of wisdom which neither the experience of the whole previous life, nor the combined efforts of most assiduous monitors, had been able to bring home to it. When the Most High thus preaches, his preaching brooks no indifference. With the sceptre of his power he strikes the flinty heart, and the sealed fountains of tender emotion gush forth. At the blast of his trumpet, the stout defences of the

stubborn spirit fall, and leave it captive to the momentous truth he proclaims.

But we, I trust, would *choose* to listen to his providential word. We would hear what God the Lord would speak. We would yield to his teaching, not as those who are vanquished by his power, but as those who have confidence in his love.

What volumes of wisdom doth he sometimes crowd into the experience of an hour! What new and vivid revelations of the soul and of eternity does he make through the instrumentality of a single event! What revolutions in our plans, our relations, our views of life, our characters, by the occurrences of a day! With what different feelings do we sometimes come up to the sanctuary, and bend before the altar of prayer, and hearken to his word, after the brief interval that separates one Sabbath from another!

> We cannot be what we have been before;
> We have submitted to a new control:
> Dear friends have gone, whom nothing can restore,
> And deep distress hath humanized the soul.

Events have preached to the preacher most closely, most affectingly, since we last met. If he speaks at all, must they not — ought they not to

give a coloring to his words? Would it not seem like heedlessness of God's providence, as well as an act of violence to his own feelings, if his discourse were not to reflect the scenes which God has made to pass before his eyes, and be stamped with the fresh impressions which God has made upon his heart?

Eloquent lips have discoursed of the "Voices of the dead;" but none can know how powerful and tender those voices are, save one who meditates calmly and deeply, with open mind and heart, in the presence of the lifeless relics of a valued friend. He must listen attentively who would hear the speech of the dead. His ear must be closed to all earthly noises. His mind must be abstracted from all mortal vanities. All his proud feelings must be humbled, — all his wrong passions subdued. His heart must be made soft and gentle by a loving grief. Then, and then only, will he be in a condition to hear those unearthly voices; for then his soul will be as a harp attuned and waiting to vibrate with solemn and sweet music, as the hallowing influence of the scene before him floats gently over it.

Blessed is he who *thus* contemplates and com-

munes with the dead. No intercourse with the living is so elevating or so sweet. No teachers teach like them. No lips are touched with such persuasive eloquence as those that cannot open to emit a sound. No expression of the animated countenance is so affecting as the meek composure of that which is reposing so still in its deep sleep. Never did those hands bless us more than now that they are folded motionless, as in prayer, upon the unconscious breast. Never were such deep and pure thoughts stirred in living converse with our friend, as are awakened now in the presence of his cold remains. Oh! how much have they missed of holy and happy influence, who have buried their dead, without opening their hearts to the instructions they might have conveyed; without composing the spirit to commune with them; without seeking retirement from the noisy world long enough and deep enough to hear their voices!

The ordinary cares of life are interrupted. The current of thought is turned from its common channel. Business is suspended. The store is closed. The account-books lie unopened in the desk. A solemn stillness reigns in the house. Friends speak but in whispers. The family move from room to

room with noiseless tread. The strong excitement of the sick chamber is spent. The deep interest of the closing scene is over. The hands, of late so diligent in tenderest ministry, hang motionless. The mind, just now so watchful, so studious, so anxious, so restless with alternate hope and fear, is left wholly to reflection, — is alone with one great theme. It is the season for deepest, purest thought. If it be not improved, what season, what influences, would be? If such a call to deep meditation, profound penitence, and high resolve, is not heard, what summons would be loud enough to rouse the spirit from its indifference? If, in that impressive lull of worldly noises, the heart will not reverently listen to the instructions of conscience and God, what hope is there that it can ever be otherwise than deaf to them amidst the obtrusive clamor of earth?

I bring to you, my friends, a few impressions fresh from such a season as I have described. I have wished to gather, for our mutual benefit, a few lessons from the scenes that have so lately passed before me.

1. How different it is to preach and to realize the *evanescence of earth!* We often proclaim that

truth with sincerity and with feeling, but not with the vivid conception, not with the conviction of its reality, that possesses us in the presence of our dead. They are gone! We are *all* going! "Pilgrims and sojourners," says the Old Scripture; "Pilgrims and sojourners," the fluttering heart replies. "We have here no continuing city," the words of inspiration have taught us; "No continuing city" is echoed from the vacancy within; "No continuing city" is the responsive admonition of those, who, bound to a better country, have vanished from our straining sight more speedily than "the swift ships." "What is your life?" the heavenly teacher has asked us from our childhood up. *Now* we anticipate his answer: "*It is even as a vapor.*"

Yesterday, our speech was of home. To-day, where is our home? Dissolved, broken, gone. How shadowy! how like gossamer! We just have time to weave those pleasant ties which bind our hearts together; just opportunity to learn the truth and value of each other's love; just one sweet draught at the pure fountain of domestic bliss; just one short stroll in the Eden that our mutual affection has prepared for us; when, lo! the sum-

mons comes for us to bid adieu to each other's society; the desire of our eyes is taken suddenly from us; lover and friend are hurried away; the wind bloweth upon our paradise, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, and the springs are dry. To the familiar spot we instinctively return again and again, in search of the joy of which it has been the scene; but loneliness is there. We wander from place to place, seeking that something dear and satisfying which we cannot find, and bear about with us everywhere that widowed feeling at the heart which nought below the skies can fill.

How brief our earthly home! Its inmates, for one cause or another, pass out over its threshold, and return no more. Its associations are broken, and cannot be renewed. Its roof decays, and strangers build upon its foundations. New names appear on its doors, or are carved on its ancestral trees. New faces are seen at its windows. New voices are heard in the haunts of our childhood's play. New hearts beat warmly around its glowing hearth. Sweet dream! Only a dream! Yesterday, it seemed to us a reality. It is but a picture of the memory now.

But is it all a dream? Is it only in remembrance? We look again at our dead. We recall their latest looks, — their parting words. We saw no signs of fading love. We caught no evidence of decaying joy. We heard no dreary lament, prophetic of a perpetual desolation. Their last look was like that of the long-absent, when he nears his native land. Their last word was *home*, uttered not in despair, but hope. "They died in faith, having afar off *seen* the promises; persuaded of them and embracing them; declaring plainly that they were seeking a country, — that they looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

That heavenly city, how plainly they beheld as they drew near to it! The mild light shining from its pearly gates, how clearly was it reflected upon us in their aspiring smile! Quickly they left us; *for they were going home.* On the shore of their short exile, which our friendship had helped to lighten, they lingered only for a parting embrace and a parting benediction, ere, waving adieu, they loosed from earth, and made all haste to heaven. How plainly they declared that they sought a country — a better country — the soul's native

clime — a dearer home! Over that home no change cometh. From its peaceful gates we shall go out no more. The ties that are woven there shall never be unwound. There no anticipation of parting shall mar the joy of our communion. There no strange forms shall displace the objects of our love. There no virtue shall fade, no aspiration be disappointed, no pure friendship fail, no service of kindness be wanting. Over *that* garden no cold wind shall blow; but our bower of love shall be twined with amaranthine branches, and gales of immortal life keep our joys in perpetual bloom.

That home is ready for us always. That garden of life waits for our coming. Our Father is there; our Redeemer is there; our parents, our kindred, our old companions, are there. Blessed seats, unimagined delights, are in preparation for us. An innumerable company of those who love us, long but for our participation to complete their joy. What boots it, then, how fast we go? Why should we marvel that infant spirits are so often drawn upward by the mighty attraction of celestial love? Why should we murmur, when the friend of our bosom yields to this unwearied constraint, and takes

his flight to heaven? Why should we call it untimely, when blooming youth bounds away from our fond embraces to angelic bands? "Man goeth to his LONG HOME." Why, then, should "the mourners go about the streets"?

My friends, how grand, how animating, is the lesson of the rapid and disorderly procession to the grave! Behold how they fall around us, frequent and numberless as the autumn leaves! Behold the bands of little ones, just alighting on our globe to beautify it with another smile, and then speeding on! Behold the young men in their strength, and the maidens in their beauty; parents, whose children clasp their necks, pleading so plaintively for protection, that one might think even Death would relent; behold the lovely, who are so needful to earth, and the useful, who can so ill be spared, — all mingled promiscuously in the receding throng, and with ruthless haste hurried to the tomb! How swiftly the tide of being sweeps over the earth! How the ascending spirits spurn our lower world, as they spread their wings for the heavenly city! How little account they make of time! How slight the soul's regard of the things which appear to us so important! How do

the hosts on hosts, as they crowd to death, shout to us, "This is not your rest"! How do the innocent and the pure, as they fly upwards, make us feel the strangeness of earth, and beckon us to a more congenial clime! How does this earnest haste of humanity to the grave proclaim to us the instinctive impatience of the heaven-born spirit to put off the mortal, and put on immortality; to cast away its corruptible tenement, and be clothed upon with its house that is in heaven!

In this connection, let me remind you, my friends, of the valuable results that can hardly fail to be produced in the character and feelings, in the time of bereavement, by the *reception of the thought of death.*

A distinguished German, whose heart was as warm and true as his intellect was bold, wrote thus in his diary concerning the impressions of a certain evening: — "This has been the weightiest evening of my life; for the thought of death has come home to me." He who cannot sympathize with this experience understands but little of the true grandeur of life. The idea of death presents itself more or less frequently to every mind. The thought of it comes up occasionally even to the most careless

and busy. But it is often only superficially regarded, partially entertained, obscurely and distantly contemplated, if not hastily dismissed. Comparatively seldom is it *received*, realized. But, when it is received, the result cannot be otherwise than weighty. The whole nature of the recipient will feel it, and feel it deeply. The hour will be a marked hour. The whole future of the individual will be affected by it. Existence can never again be abandoned to trifling. A sense of seriousness and grandeur, more or less influential, will thenceforth reside in the heart. Life will have a different aspect, duty a profounder meaning, and the temporal and the eternal more or less change places as substantial and shadowy.

The change thus produced, the new feeling and purpose thus awakened, are strikingly described by the writer alluded to, in the remainder of the passage from which I have quoted: "Henceforth, my brothers, I will love you more. I will create for you more joys. I will give up my selfish employments, let alone my ambitious plans, and direct my powers to do you good." Are not these the feelings natural to the heart, when the thought of death is realized? Does it not strike through our

selfishness as with a sword? Does it not dash our ambitious projects? Does it not turn the heart to thoughts and deeds of charity? Does it not quicken the pulse of benevolence? Does it not stir the wish to be useful? Does it not make us ashamed of low desires and mean passions? Does it not kindle aspiration after the highest good? Does it not prompt and nerve the soul to seek and to do that which cannot die? 'So short a time to live!' is not this the feeling which the thought of death brings with it? 'So short a time to spend on earth! shall I not spend it well? So little while in this body, to serve my friends! shall I not improve it in doing them good? What is indestructible, save the good I do? What is worth living for, save the benefit of my brethren, and the blessedness of blessing others?'

2. Another impression, and one of the most powerful which the scenes I have witnessed have produced, — an impression, moreover, which, so far as my observation extends, is much more usual in the chamber of death than might be imagined, — is that of the Divine love, the tender mercy of our God. The time of mourning is indeed the time of blessing: the hour when friends part from us, that

in which our God draws nigh. In the season of our bereavements, however heart-rending they may be, the afflictive dealings of God are softened to us by many most gracious alleviations, and many most touching proofs of his pity.

The Angel of Death, dreaded as he may be by many, and terrible as the excited fancy represents him in the distance, is far more frequently kind and gentle in the performance of his solemn duties. He deals with the departing tenderly; gradually he dissolves the ties that bind him to the world; almost imperceptibly steals from the heart its love of life; softly spreads a veil over the senses; and alleviates, by unperceived ministrations, the pains of the body and the undefinable terrors of the mind. With a benignant care, moreover, he spares the feelings of surviving friends; irradiating, at intervals, the pallid countenance over which they bend in breathless anxiety, with lovelier smiles and more angelic expressions than it was wont to wear; displaying triumphantly the worth and beauty of the soul, as the body decayeth; allowing the heart, with its treasure of love, to live, and communicate its affection by signs never to be forgotten, even after the voice is dumb, and the ear and the eye are

sealed; and then, when the spirit has taken its flight, lingering over the precious clay and composing the cold features to a serene and hopeful smile.

Those who are familiar with the visitations of death know well, that they often afford, not only the sublimest, but the most satisfactory, winning, and lovely scenes that are ever presented to the contemplation of man.

And, even when death comes in its more sudden and terrific forms, the Christian mind, in the shock and bitterness of its bereavement, even before it has time to reason and collect its thoughts, is seldom left to a feeling of complaint or despair. Faith instinctively keeps it humbled and still, nor suffers it to oppose or arraign the Almighty's decree. Trust engirdles the swelling heart, and will not let it burst. An unknown power takes dominion of its distracted thoughts, calms the tumultuous waves of grief, and holds it safe from wild derangement, till the violence of the shock has passed, and the soul has found time to recover its energies, and tranquillize its multitudinous emotions. A power, rather felt and understood, gives the feelings, in that awful hour, an unearthly calm; and secretly infuses into the deepest heart an entire

and unconquerable conviction of the goodness and mercy which it cannot see. An unknown power, did I say? It has a name, known and dear to Christian experience. It is the Spirit, the Comforter, from the Father and the Son, which, sent down to the believing soul in the first agony of its bereavement, when the voice of human consolation sounds harsh and cold, steals in silently, through that inner gate which opens only to God, and, with a touch so tender that the wounded spirit shrinks not, nor even suspects the time and mode of its appliance, communicates sufficient grace; and the soul, — unconscious, at the moment, of the benefaction, — afterwards, looking back and wondering at what it has been carried through, recognizes with a devout gratitude the Divine Giver in the greatness and gentleness of the gift.

But the manifestation of the loving-kindness of God in our bereavement only *begins* with the beginning of our sorrow; begins, but never ends; — begins by sustaining, and goes on by purifying, and elevating, and preparing the heart for more refined and lasting joy; — begins with consoling us for our earthly disappointment, and goes on by invigorating us with more than earthly hopes; —

begins by making us submissive, and continues by making us grateful; — begins by soothing us to patience *in* our sufferings, and will never end till by them it shall have made us perfect. And amongst all the various instrumentalities for our highest good, for the correction of our faults, and the improvement of our characters, is there any more frequently or more powerfully efficacious, — any in its results more conspicuously stamped with bright evidences of the Divine wisdom and love, than the ministry of bereavement? When the soil of the heart is hard, how often have we seen it harrowed up and mellowed, by the uprooting of affections centering in the earthly, that were too deeply imbedded in it, and whose intertwining roots left no room for the seed of heaven! The wand of the Angel of Death has touched the flinty breast, and it has become a living fountain of sympathy and all gentle emotions. When the mortal presence of a friend is withdrawn, a more hallowing influence, as if his spirit still lingered near, comes to take its place; and the minister of comfort to the body has seemed, by the change of death, not so much to have been removed, as transformed into a minister of spiritual edification and peace. Even those

whose lovely life has been our best monitor appear to need death to make their high service complete. The good serve us still more by their death than by their life, and, when they have become angels, seem to be gifted with larger power of secretly blessing us. Enjoying the sweet and calm delights of a peaceful and united family, we are sometimes almost tempted to wish that the lovely scene might never be dissolved, — the happy circle never broken. But deeper thought convinces us, that, were there no sepulchre in our earthly garden, there would be no angels of love and purity at the fireside; that, were there no sicknesses and no chance of separation, there would be no disinterestedness, no fidelity, no heavenly-mindedness, — nothing to draw out and task our higher affections, — nothing to bind us together by wholly pure and spiritual ties. Those very qualities in our friends, that make them most dear to us, demand death, in order to their fullest life; require the putting off of corruption, in order to the putting on of incorruption; call for the sowing in weakness, that there may be a rising in power and glory.

I know well
That they who love their friends most tenderly
Still bear their loss the best. There is in love

A consecrated power, that seems to wake
Only at the touch of death from its repose
In the profoundest depths of thinking souls,
Superior to the outward signs of grief,
Sighing, or tears. When these have passed away,
It rises calm and beautiful, like the Moon,
Saddening the solemn night, yet with that sadness
Mingling the breath of undisturbed repose.

Many and precious are the sheaves with which we have at length returned, laden, from our tearful sowing in the field of death. Those graves to which, at first, we went so reluctantly, with what deep and holy joy have we afterwards revisited! Once, no object on earth looked so repulsive; afterwards, none so inviting. Once, the deepest gloom rested upon them; but now a beam of heavenly light has severed the overhanging cloud, and gilds them with a mild beauty. Once they seemed to bury and hide from us all that made existence desirable; but now to be instrumental to our highest life. They are, indeed, to the survivor, as well as to the departed, the very portals of heaven.

3. Another impression, and one of the deepest which I have brought from the chamber of death, is of the value and dearness of our blessed Redeemer to the heart, in the hour of bereavement. Willingly as we may at other times acknowledge his claims to

our confidence and love, — sustaining and sweet as his image may habitually be to us, — and often as we may have found strength and rest from sitting at his feet and reclining on his bosom, yet never does he seem so precious, never so near, and never do our hearts cling to him with such tender yearnings of desire and trust, as when the lovely and the wise, our stay and our rejoicing, our teachers and our comforters, are taken suddenly away from us. Then the heart, staggering in weakness and darkness and loneliness, instinctively feels after *him*, — after him who has wept, and is strong; who has suffered, and is conqueror; who is tender as a child towards our sorrows, and clothed with the might of God for our succour; whose powerful words can stir our courage, or console our grief; whose love is unchanging amidst the mutations of time; whose death has consecrated the grave, and robbed it of its gloom; whose resurrection is the pledge of our immortality; whose ascension lifts our thoughts above the wrecks of earth and the depression of mortal griefs; who has lightened the cross of suffering and softened the pillow of death to our beloved, and holds their souls in safety till we meet them again.

But time would fail me, were I to speak of all the impressions of the season of bereavement; and they whose hearts are open to the teachings of God's providence will not need to be reminded of its duties, — submission to a Father's wisdom, and trust in a Father's love; patience to wait and watch in the darkness, till mercy brings backs the dawn; self-possession and courage and hope; and, above all, love, — love the highest duty and the best consolation, — love to God and man, — love to sweeten the bitterness of the cup, and love to kiss the hand that holds it to the lips, — love to behold and feel the goodness that is still around us, and blessing us even in the height of our anguish, — love still to rejoice because others are happy, and to resolve anew to live to make them so. These divine lessons, and many, many more, affliction itself teaches the docile mind better, far better, than the tongue of the preacher or the pen of the wise.

The sacredness of filial and fraternal love, no less than the proprieties of the occasion, suffer me not to speak as I would of those departed friends whose images are now so clearly present to my heart. If their purified spirits are permitted to hover near to the beloved they have left behind them, here

grouped together in the worship of the same great Spirit they are rapturously adoring, let no long eulogy offend their modest ears. A few simple words may say what duty demands, though not what affection desires; — a few simple words, not to honor *them*, but to praise Him who is glorified by the light of every good life, and whose own word has taught us that the righteous shall be kept in everlasting remembrance.

It is indeed a high and holy debt to "bind a garland around the brows" of a Christian whose glorious work on earth is done. The testimony of a faithful life and the witness of a triumphant death belong to the church universal. They are of no private ownership, but are the precious inheritance of the great family of God; not to be selfishly hidden therefrom, if their commemoration can inspire with courage a fainting spirit, or animate one feeble heart to strive patiently for faith's victory.

And such was thy double witness, saintly Mother! Thou, who didst teach us how to live, hast also showed us how to die; for thou hast been faithful unto death. The quiet triumph of thy virtuous life has been consummated in the victory of a glo-

rious death. Thou hast come off conqueror, and more than conqueror, through him that loved us. Thy last act of public worship was to pledge anew thy vows at the table of his love. The closing words of the parting hymn, in whose music thy lips joined so fervently, before we went out from that sacred ceremony, have been fulfilled to thyself — how soon!

> In the steps the fathers trod,
> We are travelling home to God:
> They are happy now, and we
> Soon their happiness shall see.

Thou *didst* travel in the steps of the fathers. In those good old paths thou wast content to walk. And thou hast given us another bright evidence, that those paths lead to safety and peace on earth, — to glory and rest in heaven.

Bereavement and pain could not shake her established trust. In the fearful gloom her courage strengthened, and love grew with her sufferings. Fell disease marked no ravages upon her serene brow, hung no dark ensign upon her beaming face, nor spoiled her smile of one tender ray. Had it been an angel of peace drawing her gently to the skies, it could not have been entertained more cheerfully. A perfect love-light beamed in her

countenance, and the very bliss of heaven was mirrored in her eyes. Thus, at the last, through a thorny path, as if it had been a path of flowers, she travelled home quickly to God; the spirit growing more radiant even unto the end, only dimmed for one instant as it floated through the mists of death, to sparkle with a still clearer lustre on emerging into a cloudless sky.

And waiting for its rising into heaven was one of the newest of the angels, whose childlike spirit had so lately secured for herself sweetest welcome to their purest circles.

Her nature, to its inmost part,
Faith had refined, and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given:
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast,
Till it exhales to heaven.

Was ever spirit that could bend
So graciously? — that could descend,
Another's need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne? —
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute!

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things;
Her quiet is secure:

No thorns can pierce her tender feet,
Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
As climbing jasmine, pure;

As snow-drop on an infant's grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends;
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain-top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death!
Thou strikest, — absence perisheth;
Indifference is no more:
The future brightens on our sight,
For on the past hath fallen a light
That tempts us to adore.

And now, what remains for me, in closing this brief tribute to these most valuable friends, but to obey, in their behalf, the command of that heavenly "Voice" which spake to the holy Exile of Patmos concerning all "who die in the Lord." I seem almost to hear that same voice bidding me to "write" now those blessed words, so full of the Divine approval and of glorious promise, which to few, in whose commemoration they are used, can be more justly applicable than to them. And, whilst I borrow the words of the sacred penman, my heart also catches the thrill of exultation and joy which

passed through his own while he wrote them. He had just before been describing in appalling language the terrible doom of the wicked. The mind shrinks from the contemplation of the picture: the heart shudders at the recital. It is, indeed, a *truth*, and a truth which needs to be proclaimed, powerfully proclaimed, so that it may make a deep impression upon the soul of man. Therefore the dreadful imagery passed before the prophet's eye; therefore his pen of truth and fire traced the horrid scene.

But he turns from the dark picture, so soon as his task is executed, with evident relief. His heart is glad when the scene changes in his vision, — when the Spirit leads him to meditate a sweeter theme, — when it moves him to sing the rest of the faithful, and to discourse of the blessedness of the saints. And heaven also seems to share his joy. For, when the angel was revealing the punishment of the ungodly, while the prophet listened sadly and wrote with trembling, heavenly natures were silent in their contiguous obscurity. But now, when the discourse is of the peace and glory of the Christian dead, a voice from heaven breaks the solemn stillness, — a celestial echo responds to

the holy purpose that inspired his soul: "Yea, write," — record, proclaim, perpetuate for ever, the glorious truth, — "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."